

Cāltīpan

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Our Homeland



B L A C K E A G L E

C h i c a n o C h i e f



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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the peoples of Oaxaca, from whose loins contributed to the great Chicano peoples of the Southwest, who acknowledge them as bothers and sisters from another mother but from the same Creator.

Acknowledgment

This is an acknowledgment to the Livas clan, who bore listening to me long enough to finally give me the incentive to write something about our people, so our children and grandchildren will know the story of whence they came.

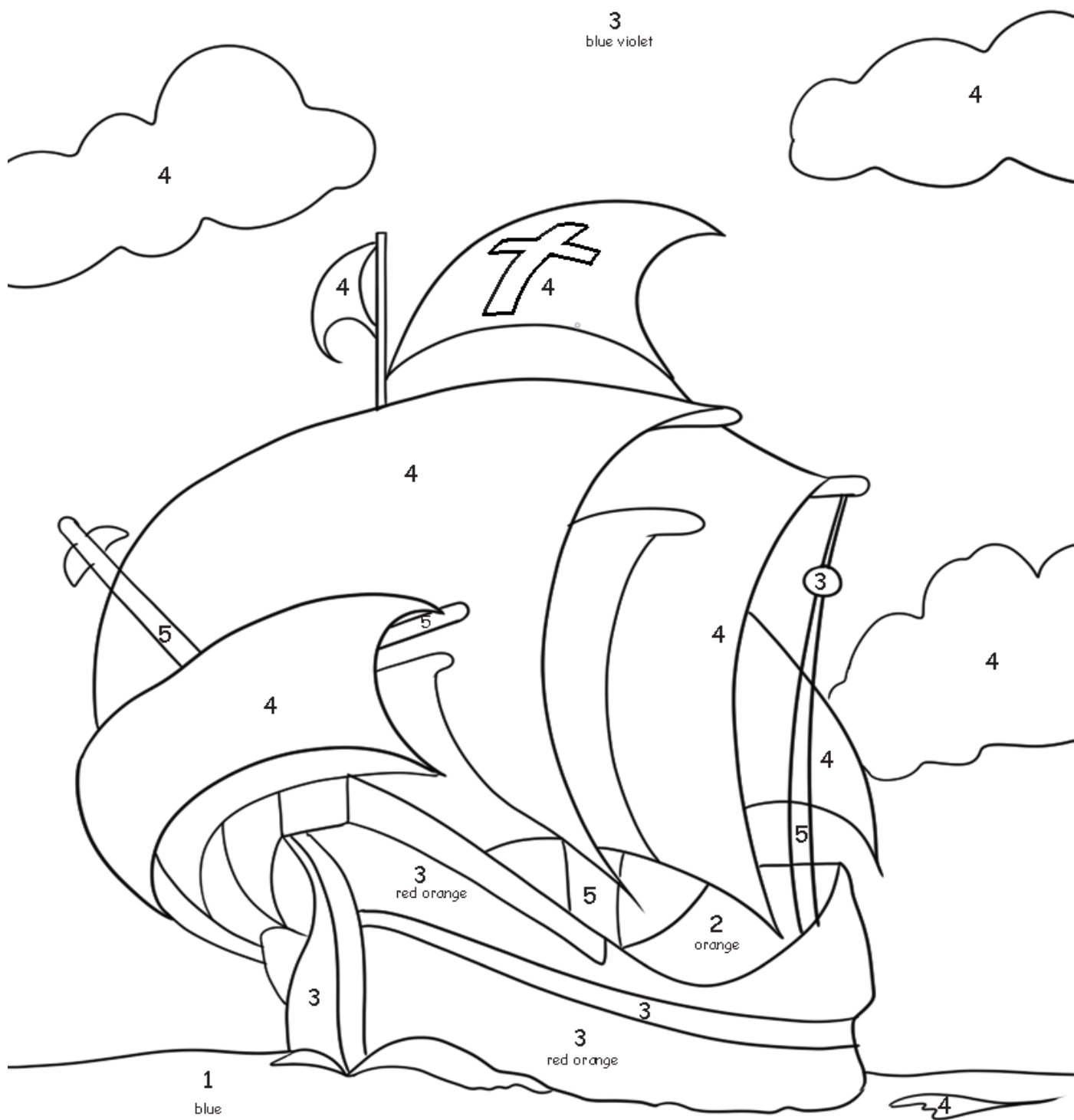
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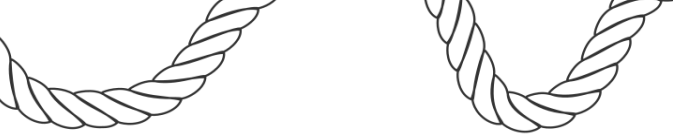
Black Eagle
Chicano Chief

Black Eagle was named by his chief, Fox Hunter of the Vargas Clan of Texas, who trained him in the craft of measuring and marking the land. This honorable profession was passed on from the Spanish to us. They learned it from the Romans and improved it with the trigonometry gained during the Moorish rule of Spain.

SPANISH ARRIVE

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Noelle who loved to learn new things. She was always asking questions, and one night, during story time with her dad, she asked a question that led her on an interesting journey.





“Daddy, can you tell me about history?” she asked.

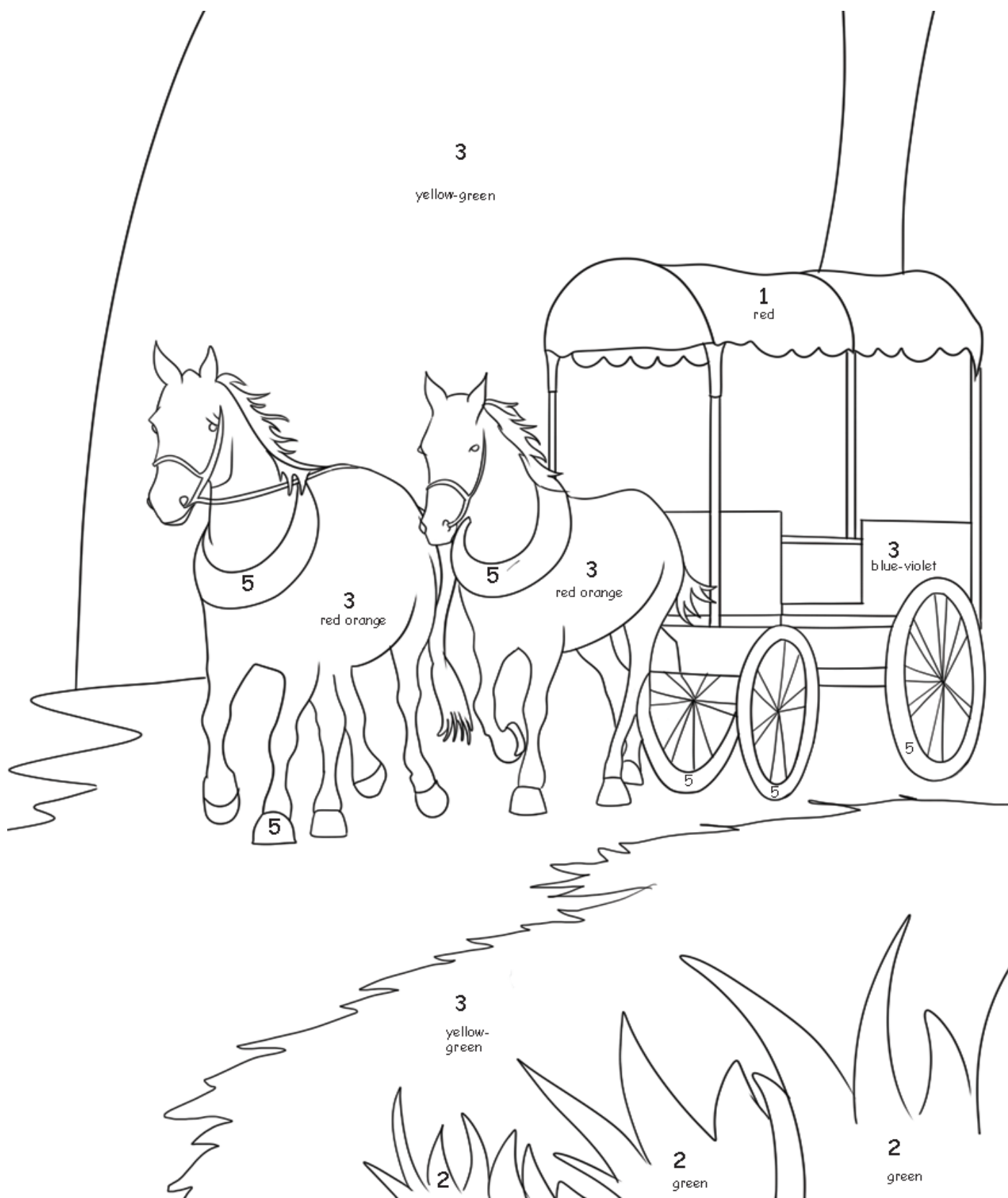
“Of course, my dear. Where would you like to start?” her father replied.


Noelle thought for a moment before saying, “Umm, I would like to know how we came to California.”

Her father smiled briefly and said, “Well, it goes back hundreds of years to when our ancestors moved here. It is a long story, but I will do my best to explain it to you.”

Noelle snuggled up in her cozy bed with her favorite blanket, and her dad sat down beside her in a chair.





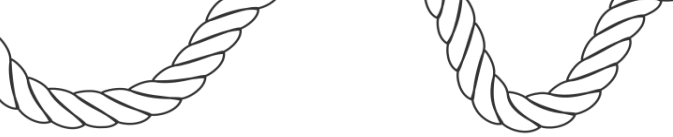


“Our history dates back to the 16th century, when the Spanish conquerors led by Hernan Cortes arrived in what is now known as Mexico. The Aztec Empire, which was then in power, fell to the Spanish alliance with the Zapotec—” her father explained.

Noelle’s eyes shone as if she had just found another way to feel her curiosity, and she asked, “Who were our ancestors, and where did they originally come from?”

“After mingling with Spanish and Zapotec, our people journeyed from the Camino Real, which was constructed as a main route for Spanish commerce and settlement,” her father began. “As our ancestors journeyed along the Camino Real, they met various Native tribes with their own unique cultures and traditions.”





“In New Mexico, they met the Pueblo tribes, who lived in villages and practiced agriculture. The Pueblo tribes were known for their brick houses and their skilled pottery and basket making. They traded with our ancestors, exchanging agricultural products and handmade crafts for European goods such as metal tools and cloth,” he continued.

“In those times, trading was an important aspect of life as it served as a means to gain different tools for survival. It gave the people with fewer agricultural resources a chance to obtain them through trading to what they had in abundance,” her father explained.


“What were those agricultural products and handmade crafts?” Noelle asked.

“As they were skilled farmers, they traded the tools they had made for farming, such as digging sticks, stones, axes, bows, arrows, and sharp-edged stones. These were tools that they used for framing and hunting. As for the food items and other things that they traded, they used surplus corn, ceramics, and textiles,” her father said.

“That is so amazing. I cannot wait to learn more about the.” Noelle exclaimed.







“Our ancestors also encountered the Navajo and Apache tribes, who were nomadic and relied on hunting and gathering for their livelihood. The Navajo were known for their beautiful woven rugs and blankets, which they traded with our ancestors. And the Apache were skilled traders and our ancestors’ traded horses for passage and goods,” her father pointed out.

Noelle listened intently to her father as he dove deeper into how people in ancient times discovered different means for them to connect with other tribes and created a way that benefited everyone altogether. She learned that trading was important, and that people could help each other by trading things they had for things they needed.





“As they traveled westward through Arizona, they met the Yaqui tribe, who lived in the Sonoran Desert region. The Yaqui were known for their agricultural practices and skilled crafts, like basket weaving and pottery. They were also great storytellers and musicians. Our people traded with the Yaqui, exchanging European goods and Zapotec seeds for handmade crafts and other products.” Her father continued.

Noelle was curious and asked, “What else did they use in trading?”

Papa answered, “Oh, there were many more products used, like local foods, shells, salts, furs, and other goods such as chocolate, squash, corn, beans, tomato, avocado, citrus fruit, and seeds.”





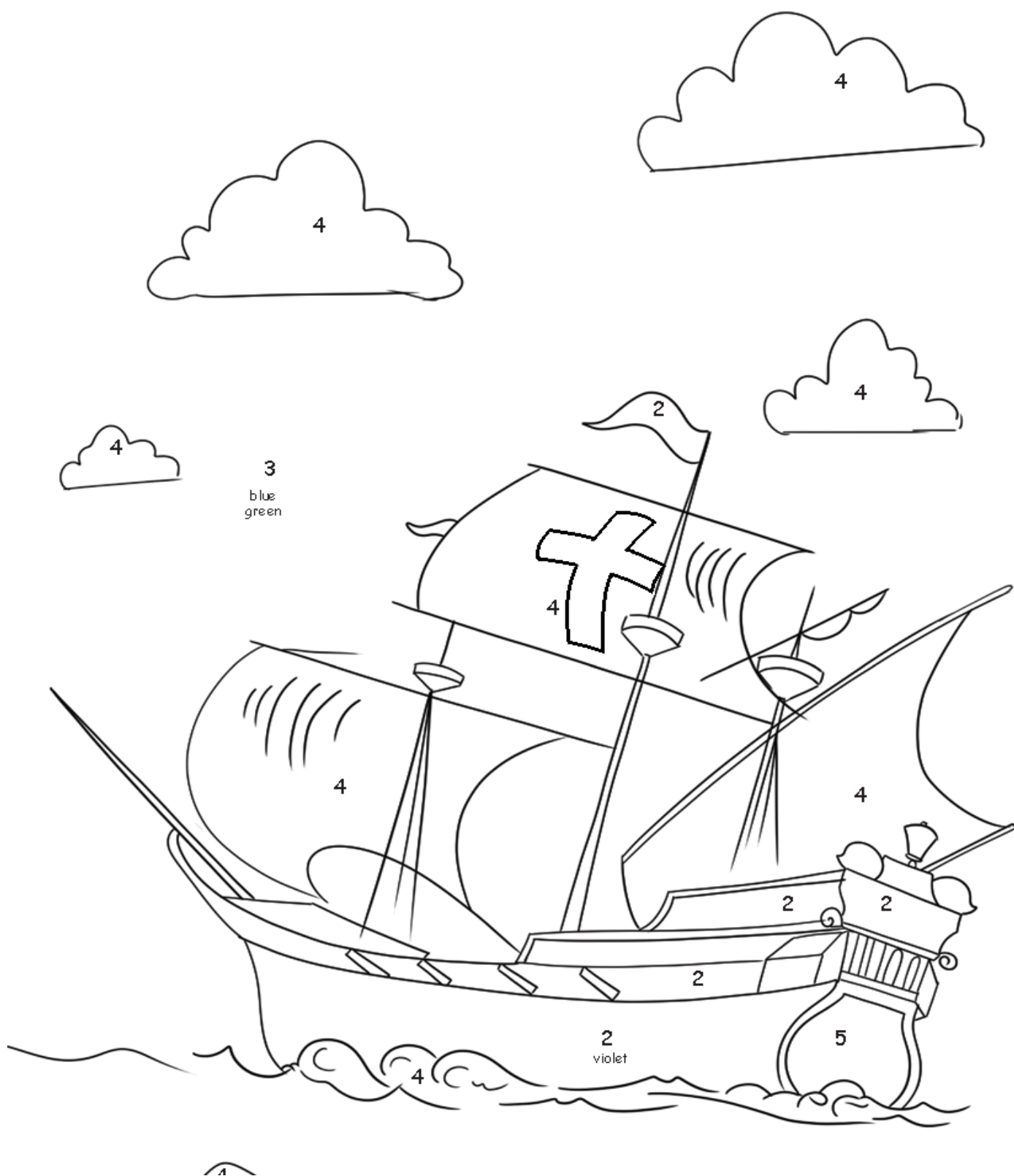
“As they continued their journey into California, they met the Cahuilla and Luiseño tribes, who lived in the Southern California region. These tribes were known for their complex basket weaving, beautiful songs, and rich oral traditions. They traded with these tribes, exchanging European goods for handmade crafts and other products like mesquite beans, wild fruit, acorns, seeds of all kinds, yucca, and agave. They also traded animal and mineral products, shells, and foods with the tribes of the surrounding areas.”


“People even married into different people. For instance, our family was a mixed family that was largely known as Zapotec. The Zapotec people were intertwined with the Spanish, and those people were called Mestizo.”

Noelle exclaimed, “Wow, that’s so interesting! What happened next?”

Father replied, “Finally, as we approached the Bay Area to settle on Spanish Peralta Grant lands, we encountered the Ohlone and Costanoan tribes. The Ohlone were known for their intricate basket weaving and shell jewelry, while the Costanoan’s were known for their sophisticated quillwork and beadwork. They traded items like mussels, dried abalone meat, salt, and abalone shells. Both tribes held ceremonies and rituals to honor their ancestors and spiritual beings. We traded with these tribes and learned about their cultures and traditions.







“As our ancestors reached the Bay Area, they settled in the Peralta land, which had been deeded to our Spanish grandfather, General Peralta, by the King of Spain. We built our homes and started our families, laying the foundations for our community. Throughout our journey, we encountered a rich and diverse array of Native cultures throughout every part of the lands we crossed to finally settle here.”

Father the explained, “After some time, when the Americans came, the land was taken from us using clever laws in violation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the conflict between the Americans and the Mexicans with the promise to protect Spanish and Mexican land grants. Local laws, ignoring the International Treaty, were made to take the lands of the Mexican people.”

Noelle looked concerned, but her father continued, “Those were difficult times for the indigenous, but eventually peace was achieved. Throughout our ancestors’ whole journey, they met incredible tribes with rich traditions and customs. All those explored traditions may have been teleported with us as we settled in the Bay Area. They are a part of who we are and have helped to shape our unique heritage.”

Dianna smiled and thanked Papa for sharing their family’s history and culture with her.

Papa said, “Remember, our history is part of who we are. It’s important ot understand and appreciate it, and realize which we cannot change history, we can, by planning, like our ancestors planned their journey change the future.”

With that, Noelle’s journey of learning about her ancestors and everything that constituted their lives began.



